AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph [0011] with the following amended paragraph:

[0011] In still another embodiment, the invention comprises an implant for facilitating grafting spinal bones together, comprising a housing for situating between the spinal bones, the housing cooperating with the spinal bones to define a graft area and an opening for introducing graft material into the graft opening; and a cover for securing to the spinal bones, the cover covering the opening after the graft material is situated ~~it~~ is fixed to the spinal bones.

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following amended paragraph:

[0014] In another embodiment, the invention comprises a spinal fusion system for use as a prosthetic implant comprising a housing dimensioned to be situated between adjacent spinal bones, the housing defining a graft area for receiving a graft or graft-like material for generating a fusion between the adjacent spinal bones, the housing comprising at least one wall that defines an opening after the housing is situated between the adjacent spinal bones to permit post-placement loading of graft material.

Please replace paragraph [0016] with the following amended paragraph:

[0016] Fig. 1 is a partial side view of a human spine illustrating anteriorly discs between various spinal bones;

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] Fig. 7 is ~~a~~ an exploded view of the device shown in Fig. 6, illustrating a plurality of housings and a single cover for use with covering the plurality of housings;

Please replace paragraph [0026] with the following amended paragraph:

[0026] Fig. 11 is ~~a~~ an exploded view of the elongated housing illustrated in Figs. 8 and 9 and the cover and screws associated therewith;

Please replace paragraph [0029] with the following amended paragraph:

[0029] Fig. 14 is ~~a~~ an exploded view of the housings and cover illustrated in Fig. 13;

Please replace paragraph [0030] with the following amended paragraph:

[0030] Fig. 15 is a partial anterior side view of a human spine illustrating the discs between various spinal bones;

Please replace paragraph [0040] with the following amended paragraph:

[0040] Fig. 25 ~~illustrations~~ illustrates another embodiment of the invention without crossbars or migration preventers;

Please replace paragraph [0047] with the following amended paragraph:

[0047] Fig. 2 illustrates a fragmentary view of the spinal column S shown in Fig. 1, with the discs 18, 20 and 22 removed. It should also be understood that during another surgical procedure, such as a vertebrectomy, it may be desired to remove part ~~of~~ or all of one of the spinal bones 10-16, as illustrated in Fig. 13. In this type of neurological procedure, it may also be desired to fuse adjacent spinal bones together for reasons that are conventionally known. This invention provides means for facilitating and performing such procedures. For ease of illustration, Figs. 15 - 20 provide corresponding anterior views to the side views shown in Figs. 1-6, respectively.

Please replace paragraph [0050] with the following amended paragraph:

[0050] As illustrated in Fig. 11, the housing 32 is generally U-shaped as shown. In the embodiment being described, the housing 32 comprises a well 33 defining multiple sides and ~~comprises~~ comprising a predetermined shape selected to cause the graft material to be formed into a multi-sided fused coupling between adjacent spinal bones, such as bones 10 and 12 in Fig. 3. Although not shown, the housing 32 could define a shape other than rectangular, such as semi-circular, oval or other suitable shape as may be desired. Note

that the housing 32 comprises a first wall 32a, a second wall 32b and a third wall 32c joining the first wall 32a and the second wall 32b. One or more of the walls 32a-32c may comprise a plurality of holes or apertures 40 which facilitate the fusing process. The apertures 40 also permit visualization of graft material 30 on x-rays.

Please replace paragraph [0053] with the following amended paragraph:

[0053] As illustrated in Fig. 11, the housing 32 comprises a first rail, channel wall or wall portion 48 and a second rail, channel wall or wall portion 50 which cooperate to define a channel area 52 for receiving the cover 42. It should be understood that when the cover 42 is received in the channel 52, the sides 42a and 42b become associated with the sides 48a and 50a. It should be understood that the cover 42 is not ~~directed~~ permanently secured to the housing 32 after it is received in channel area 52. This feature permits the housing 32 ~~secured to the housing 32~~ to migrate or float relative to the cover 42 even after the cover 42 is fixed to one or more of the spinal bones 10-16 as illustrated in Figs. 6 and 20. As illustrated in Fig. 23, the edges 42a and 42b of cover 42 and sides 48a and 50a may be beveled and complementary to facilitate locating and mating engagement between the cover 42 and housing 32.

Please replace paragraph [0056] with the following amended paragraph:

[0056] The spinal fusion system 24 further comprises at least one migration stop or crossbar 60 as illustrated in Figs. 11, 12, 29 and 30. The crossbar 60 may be either integrally formed in housing 32, as shown in Fig. 26, or separate as illustrated in Figs. ~~11,~~

~~29 and 30, as illustrated in Figs. 7, 12 and 14~~ 7, 11, 12, 14, 29 and 30, for example. As illustrated in the exploded view in Figs. 10 and 11, the surface 60a of crossbar 60 engages and cooperates with surface 42c of cover 42 to prevent anterior migration in the direction of arrow B). Thus, the spinal fusion system 24 of the embodiment being described provides means for preventing insertion of the housing 32 to a point where it might engage the spinal cord S (Fig. 3) or other neurological elements, such as dura mater, thecal sac, and also means for facilitating prevention of migration of the housing 32 in an anterior direction or in the direction of arrow B in Fig. 10 after the housing 32 is situated as described herein and the cover 42 is mounted to one or more of the spinal bones 10-16.

Please replace paragraph [0065] with the following amended paragraph:

[0065] Figs. 1-8 and 15-20 illustrate the general procedure and use of the invention in an illustrative discectomy wherein three discs are removed, replaced with housing 32, and graft material 38 inserted as described and cover 42 situated and mounted as described herein. In the illustration shown in Figs. 1-8 and 15-20, three discs 18-22 are removed and the spinal bones 12-16 are fused together using the system and method as shown and described. It should be appreciated, however, that this system and method may be used with fewer or more housings 32 and with one or a plurality of covers 42 as may be desired or required. For example, if only one of the discs 18-22 needed to be excised and only two of the spinal bones 10-16 fused together, then only one housing 32 and cover 42 may be necessary. Likewise, as mentioned earlier herein, the housings 32 may comprise a different dimension or different height H (Fig. 14) to span a greater area, such as the area H4 illustrated in Figs. 13 and 14. For example, Figs. 13 and 14 ~~illustrates~~ illustrate a vertebrectomy wherein the spinal bone 12 has been removed along with the disc between spinal bones 14 and 16. This provides areas 80 and 81 in which an elongated housing 32', such as the housing 32' illustrated in Fig. 14 may be inserted. After the housings 32 and 32' are inserted between the spinal bones 10-14 and 14-16 as shown in Fig. 13, graft areas 82 and 84 are provided for receiving the graft material 38. As illustrated in Fig. 13, the cover 42 would have a corresponding elongated shape for fixing the bones 10 and 14 together and for covering both openings 82 and 84 or housings 32 and 32'.